

129 m 3
S E R M O N,

P R E A C H E D T O T H E

694. h 1
3

Convicts under Sentence of Death in Newgate,

On SUNDAY MORNING, the 20th APRIL, 1788.

Previous to their EXECUTION on the following WEDNESDAY;

DEDICATED TO

MATTHEW BLOXAM, Esq.

SHERIFF OF LONDON.

By THE REV^d. EDWARD BARRY, M. D.

ASSISTANT PREACHER

At FITZROY AND BETHEL CHAPELS.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED BY J. DENEW, No. 109, Wardour-Street, Soho;

And Sold by J. BEW, No. 28, Paternoster Row; SMITH and Co. Corner of Newman-Street;
Row and Gordon, No. 106, Oxford-Street, and all other Booksellers.

MDCCLXXXVIII.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

A D V E R T I S E M E N T,

T H E Author of the following Sermon, had originally no intention of making it Public; or that would have been certainly done before this time, but at the pressing request of several who heard it, he has been prevailed on now to offer it. He confided wholly to his memory in the delivery of this discourse, which, has again nearly gathered up almost the words, that with plainness of speech, every other force and advantage might accompany his address to those unhappy men; for he cannot but think that at all times, the spirit of even the best composition is greatly weakened, when the attention of the speaker is principally enslaved to his notes: a discourse, in his opinion, though but of moderate, or even poor composition, yet delivered with freedom and address, will insure more attention, more instruction, and more gratification than the most classical language, when unaccompanied with those advantages.



T O
MATTHEW BLOXAM, Esq.

ONE OF THE SHERIFFS OF LONDON.

S I R,

I T is not because you are enroll'd among the first corporate body, and at this time wear the honors of Sheriff, that gave me the smallest idea of using your name on this occasion; but because you are better dignified by --- nobleness of mind --- and humanity of manners.

These required from me, this small offer of respect, and have deserved from others, that full approbation and popularity, which so distinguish you in office: Humanity, is by so much the more excellent, as the objects of it are miserable--in--Newgate; these are to be found — and 'tis there you exercise it, among the dying, — the perishing, — and the diseased.

Your

Your laudable efforts, to remove the many scandalous oppressions to which Debtors under arrest, have been so long subjected, entitle you to the highest commendations ; and the World are pain'd to learn, that where you should have been supported, there you been opposed ; I beg to return you, Sir, and the under Sheriff, my best thanks for the honor of your presence at the delivery of this Sermon : may you enjoy health, and all possible success in the struggles of your duty, and it is the hearty wish of many, I assure you, Sir, that every future Sheriff of London, may be no stranger to those virtues, which so much adorn you ;

I beg to remain, Sir, with all possible respect,

No. 8, Richmond-
Buildings, Dean-
Street, Soho.
May 24th 1788.

Your humble Servant,

EDWARD BARRY,

A

S E R M O N, &c.

ACTS XVI. Part of xxx. and xxxi Verses.

“Sirs, What must I do to be saved? — Believe on the Lord

“Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

TH E preceding verses inform us, that while Paul and Silas, were on their public ministrations, a certain damsel, possessed with an evil spirit, and who brought to her masters much gain by soothsaying, addressed them as servants of the Most High God, who pointed out the ways of salvation. She continued this language, we are told, for many days; at length St. Paul being grieved for her infirmity, commanded the evil spirit to depart from her. The masters of this damsel seeing that the hope of their gains was now gone, in a fit of resentment, no doubt, seized Paul and Silas and dragged

B

them

them before the magistrates, and accused them of being troublesome men, and unfriendly to the Roman customs; in consequence of this charge, we find that a mob rose up against them; the magistrates themselves were base enough to tear off their cloaths and commanded them to be beat, and after they had received many stripes, they were sent to prison, and the jailor received strict orders to put them into the *inner* prison, and make their feet fast in the stocks.

Picture to yourselves their miserable situation, and feel if *human* aid were only to support them, their evident distress and danger, on account, merely, of their fidelity to God, and undaunted zeal for his glory. But, instead of despair or murmuring! hear them, in the dismal dungeon, and at midnight, singing praises to God— That loving and jealous father heard the ejaculations of his children, and instantly avenged their cause by sending an earthquake to rattle the very foundations of the prison; *swift as lightning* the prison doors flew open, bars, bolts and chains all became loose! What a cordial proof is this of the efficacy of prayer and adorations to God in affliction! The jailor alarmed and terrified at what had happened, and the consequent death he must have suffered by the Roman laws, had the prisoners availed themselves

[7]

elves the opportunity of escaping; in this *panic* drew out a sword, and would have become a suicide; he would have murdered himself, had not the powerful persuasion of his holy prisoner interrupted the *horrid deed*—"Do thyself no harm" said the great Apostle, "for we are all here!" In the midst of this consternation, and from an attempt so foul, he instantly enquires for salvation and of his *prisoners* too, who were, a little while ago under his menace and controul: but see him now trembling before *them*! addressing them in the very respectable and submissive language of lords, or sirs, "What shall I do to be saved?" they said unto him, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!"

A question of such importance cannot fail to be peculiarly interesting to all of us! but especially to *you my dying fellow creatures*. — The partition between *you* and eternity, will literally remain but a very few fleeting hours! and *then* to be ushered into the presence of an angry God—*tremendous thought*!

Suffer me then, to intreat your very watchful attention, while I speak further on the words lately read: the ceremony of language, and form, shall give way to the
exigence

exigence and extremity of your case ; I will attempt to speak the *plainest* truths to you :

1st. On the importance of the enquiry “ What shall I do to be saved ; ” and

2dly. On the answer given, “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ! ”

First then, “ What shall I do to be saved ? ” and here, you must remember that the *curse* of God is transmitted to you, even through the guilt of your parent Adam ; he was the exact representative of what *we are*, made of the same materials, and liable to the same corruption ; we should have done exactly what *he* did, hence his guilt is reasonably made ours ; but supposing even your *innocence* in this matter, examine those sins immediately committed by your ownelves — see the *ten commandments* solemnly delivered to you for the rule of your life, and God himself declaring to you that he that offendeth in *one* point, offendeth in *all* ; and recollect that the offence is not confined merely to the *act*, but Divine justice penetrates even the *desire*. Can you my fellow sinners in *particular*, nay can *any* of us, but start with horror at the idea of meeting this scrutinizing, fierce judge ? you cannot.

Curled

“Curfed then is every one that continueth not in *all* things which are written in the book of the law to do them,” and is *quick vengeance* whetting in the brow of your insulted God, and bidding, as it were, this moment the thirsty blade of justice to glut her impatience on your eternal misery?— and do you feel *no agitation, no concern*, how you may be sheltered from the wrath of *enraged* omnipotence. ?

I cannot cast my eyes on you, who are now *trembling* before me, without supposing, that a *restless agonizing* thought for your acquittal before your earthly judge, has been powerfully at work; — you have no doubt eagerly asked yourselves, — your friends, — your counsellors, “What shall I do to be saved,” from death temporal? — What no thought how to be saved from death eternal? — Where must I live when my body crumbles into dust?

Is my soul the living principle to dwell in ceaseless happiness, or be plagued with never ending torments? If these interesting enquires have not hitherto engaged your very earnest attention, may they now strike you with their serious importance !

It is not insipidly to say, That you are a sinner, and calmly ask. "What shall I do to be saved?" No, no, your language must be "Save, Lord, or I perish!"—"God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Your mind must be deeply affected, and *concerned* in the enquiry—if the probability of a reprieve from your Sovereign were suggested to you, through some possible duty on your part, methinks, body and soul would almost with frantic extacy enquire, what you could do to obtain it? — with that *same sort* of feeling, — with that *same cordiality*, and *fervent zeal*, does it behove you to enquire for salvation, from the eternal sovereign of all things; and the motive of this enquiry should not arise, so much, from the *dread* of punishment, as from a thorough conviction, of having both by sins of omission, and sins of commission, basely violated all your life-long, the precepts of your God! when *thus* you are bowed down, when *thus* the *hardened rebellious heart* is melted from the *painful* reflections of guilt,—and a consciousness of your own unworthiness,—and that you merit nothing but the *wrath* of God; then indeed, and *not till then*, will the question in my text "What shall I do to be saved"

avail

avail you, nor truly will you be *inclined to propose it*; you may *possibly tremble* it with your lips, but the *soul* will not be *pierc'd*;—you would not apply to a physician, till you *felt* your *disease*, nor will you apply to God for mercy, till you are heartily *convinced*, and sorrowing for your sins.—Retire then into your gloomy cells, and take a mournful survey of your heinous offences against the great God of heaven and earth, before *whom* you are destined *so soon to appear*; who awfully declares, that the wicked shall be turned into hell!—May this sad truth sink deep, and work effectually on your minds, that the soul may be so startled with her danger, that she can find no rest by *reason of sin*; when this is your *happy* case, you'll want no Person, no argument to second the necessity of your enquiry for salvation: *would to God!* that your souls were thus formed with a sense of your guilt!

Well, do I see before me, such a candidate?—are those tears teeming down your pale faces, the genuine tokens of repentance? — are you scarcely able from a real *sensibility* of your guilt and wretchedness, — to lift up your eyes to heaven, and say, God be merciful unto me a sinner? — are you now gazing with a sort of despair, and from the bottom of your heart,

ask-

asking, "What you shall do to be saved? is this the *only*, --this the grand question, *really*, and in good earnest? if I dare think so, —or you are *convinced*, it is so, and you put the question again,—and cannot *help doing it* —and wait with *eager despairing* suspense for an answer!—I give you joy! I almost congratulate you on your salvation! — Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved! — Here is good news from heaven! What though thus deluged all over with guilt,—bound fast with irons,—too sinful to live among *sinners* themselves, — and yet believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, I shall be *saved*? Yes, *this is true*; 'tis *God*, and not *man* proclaims it by the mouth of unerring truth — it astonishes you no doubt — it seems too marvellous an act of pardon! but suffer not your faith to stagger: and we will speak to you on this divine truth, as was *secondly* proposed. — Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!

But first, let me premise, that the holy scriptures pointedly declare, That there is *no name* given under *heaven*, whereby you can be saved, but by the name of Christ, — for if, "Salvation was of *ourselves*, then did Christ die in vain," — and where but from *him*, my unhappy friends can you expect it? — Where but to the
mercies

mercies of a redeemer, can I refer you at this awful crisis? — 'tis you know, but a few hours you have to live; could I be so ignorant then,—so much an infidel, to suppose that any operations which you, or that any of us, can perform, with minds polluted all over with the blackest guilt; — and even our *best* services are impure before God! — *dare I to say*, — That there is any *meritorious* action you can perform, which will appease the wrath of heaven, for the sins of your whole life? — it would be at the peril of *my own* salvation if I did. No, my friends,—'tis your happiness and mine, that the *whole work* of redemption begun and ended with the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ: had it depended upon ourselves, — had we, even, *done all*: we should have been *unprofitable* servants, ! but instead of doing *all*; even, in our power, in heart, lip, and life to the glory of God, we have rather reversed it, and dishonored him, in every one of these.

The heart of man is evil, and that, continually, and above all things desperately wicked! And *you* must *know it*; — I call upon your testimony, without goring your feelings by any particular allusion to your situation, and that will give an immediate decisive verdict. ! — Don't mistake me! I am not supposing, that

D

you

you are sinners above all Galileans. ! No, "except we repent, we shall all likewise perish" ! — let us take alike to ourselves, all unworthiness, and infamy, before God, — and rest satisfied in this great truth ; That the day of judgement will not be trifled with, by a comparative detail of our virtues and vices, tho' *here on earth*, it is absolutely necessary, that our behaviour should be rewarded, or punished, as it bears a proportion to the one, or the other, — yet, *before God*, all must become *guilty*, God will be just, and every man a liar.

In the old testament you may read, " That the Israelites who were bitten by the fiery serpents, on account of their sins, were commanded to look up to the serpent of brass, which God commanded Moses to set up in the wilderness for their cure — those who looked up to it lived, but before that many died. This was a very exact and lively type of the Messiah that was to come ; for as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness ; even so, must the son of man be lifted up — that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.

Hence at the day of judgement, only two sorts of people will be distinguished ; those who *accepted*, and those who rejected the means of salvation ; and I wish it
were

[15]

were in my power to fix effectually on your minds, this great truth : "That mankind will not be punished so much for the *disease of sin*, as for *rejecting the cure* offered for that disease, which, is *alone in the blood of Christ*. " For this is the condemnation, that *light* is come into the world, and men love *darkness* rather than *light*, because their deeds are evil."

Behold ! then, " The lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world !" — Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, ! — rend the very heavens, with incessant Hallelujahs for this gracious promise. !

The devil's believe tho' compulsive terror, but yours must be, through joy, and comfort, in the promises of the Holy Ghost :—*You are to believe fervently in your hearts*, that Christ, the Son of God, came down from heaven, and suffered on the cross, for the sins of a *rebellious world*, — and, " that *by his stripes you are healed*. " — If thus you believe, ! all your *interest*, *all* your dependence will center *there*, — and there *only*, — Well, if this in reality be your happy treasure ! I am sure your heart will be there also,—and out of the abundance, of the heart, the mouth *will*, it cannot fail to celebrate, and triumph, in the wonders of redeeming love !

Go,

Go, weeping finners then, and hide your guilty heads, from the fury of the law of God, — hide them, under the atoning covenant, — under the wings of your dear redeemer!

See, the loving favour longing to embrace his long lost children! — Behold his flowing tears! — hearken to his expiring groans — 'twas all for you!

Fly to his expanded arms, — he *longs*, — he *waits*, to be gracious! — Go, contrite beggars to the riches of his grace, and take every supply for glory! — Stand off, thou proud strutting Pharisee! *and* make room for the poor dejected *publican*; — that Mary Magdalene, — that wicked Manasseh, — that persecuting Saul, — that poor convicted criminal, and even, — that thief, shall this day, be with me in Paradise! — What a noble defence is this, to put up at the bar of heaven! — what a glorious subject is this to speak on, — “That the blood of Christ, cleanseth us from *all* sin,” — only believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and all this is yours!

Surely, you are ready to say, — “Lord, I believe, — help thou my unbelief! — encourage then, I pray you by earnest prayer, to the throne of divine grace, that
God

God will further your desires more and more, — *be restless* in prayer, that you may have some comfortable token, before you go hence, — and be no more seen, — that your sins are washed away in the *rich streams* of mercy!

Here is the blessing of the *gospel*, That mercy triumphs over justice! — only let our triumph be *safely* founded, — let us be made acquainted with the victorious captain of our salvation, — let us not raise up the banners of triumph on *presumption*, nor drop them through despondency.

I hardly know, what more to say to you, I cannot give you faith, for that is the *gift* of God, — but whosoever sincerely petitions for it, will in no wise be cast out — he will not be *denied* — and whoever has it, must be saved to all eternity!

You see then, plainly I trust, your own case; — you are called upon, to receive a perfect cure for your disease: — *Sin*, is your disease, and I should hope a *painful* one too, — Christ, the divine physician promises to cure you, *now*, — tho' it has gone so far! — but you are to believe in his skill, and *ability*, and as one smarting

E

under

under his afflictions, — to beseech him, with all *your* might, to come and heal you at the *eleventh* hour! — Come, Lord Jesus then, come quickly to these thy dying children! Lord, give them faith! — may they believe in thee! — may they be clothed with thy righteousness, — may they be saved!

And you, who are now assembled, — whether the thoughtless, or *sad* spectators of this affecting scene! — remember, that nothing but *divine* favor has made the difference between these unhappy men and us, — we are equally criminal, every one of us, before God, as they are! too soon you cannot yourselves apply for salvation, — *too late it may be.*! — The sudden seizure of death, may not give your *unprepared* guilty souls; even a precious moment to implore the mercy of that God, — of whose name, and worship, you perhaps, live in open profanation.

Take a serious lesson, I implore you, from the example of these your fellow creatures, 'twas because they had not the *fear of God* before their eyes! — 'twas because they believed not in the Lord Jesus Christ, and did not

not wear in their lives the image of that holy Jesus, that God at length gave them over to a reprobate mind, and are thus, "Become a monster to many" — Chained and fettered, as you now see them! — *hideous sight!* — The wages of sin is *death!* — they are about to suffer death *temporal*, and the only humanity you can now exercise to their souls, is to intercede with God, by fervent prayer, that they may escape death *eternal!* — and be it your immediate caution to guard against both "Let him that *thinketh* he standeth take heed lest he fall! —" The small interval between these men and death, forbids me to talk to them, about the fruits of faith. — If they *have* faith, — God will see and acknowledge their intentions in the *bud*; but be it your duty to manifest your faith and belief in Jesus Christ, by the blossom of a virtuous and holy life, — or as our Lord says "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" at your *peril* it is if you sin — on a presumption, "that grace may abound. "To you at present I have no more to say — but to recommend to your feelings, and compassion, the wretched many, of your fellow creatures and sinners, who seem pining away with every want, within these dreary walls, and thank God, that you are the givers and not the receivers.

And now, my poor and miserable fellow sinners, — what more shall I say to you? how shall I bid you *farewell* to all eternity! I feel as a fellow creature for the natural agitations of your mind, and could join your tears, — you are surrounded with nothing but gloominess — laden with heavy irons! and have this moment, fixed before your eyes — awful sight! the pattern* of what will soon contain your youthful bodies.

All this is alarming beyond description! — but be not too much *cast down* it will soon be *over*! cast your eyes beyond the gloomy confines of the grave! — look to your Lord, he hears your sighs! soon will those galling fetters be knock'd of — you'll quickly bid adieu to all things mortal, they are *now too little* — too *distressing* for your thoughts; but lift up your hearts and voices to Christ your redeemer without ceasing; --- What have you to *fear* if Christ be yours? --- Seek him, oh seek him then, while he may be found, call upon him while he is near! --- and now blessed favour! we commend these thy servants to thy tender mercies! wash them in thy precious blood, and present them spotless to thy father! guide them thro' the valley and shadow of death! --- send thy holy spirits to conduct them to Abraham's bosom, Lord Jesus receive their souls!!

* The convicts under sentence are  by themselves, and a coffin is put in the centre, around which, before Sermon, they kneel singing the sinners lamentation.